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Letters, To and From Henry Z. Mitchell [1856-1857]

Henry Z. Mitchell

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Dearest Elizabeth;-

I will attempt to give You some of the incidents of travel to this place. We left Cleveland (from which place I wrote You) on Wednesday morning, arriving at Chicago the same evening, lay over till next morning, left Chicago on Thursday morning, arrived at Dunleath same evening- Went on board the steamer Northern Bell the same evening, but did not leave port until next morning about ten o'clock- here we encountered very cold weather, snow fell in sufficient quantity to make sleighing- remained cold until we got through Lake Pepin, Saturday night. Waked up Sabbath morning, found our boat put in at Hastings, 30 miles below St. Paul, unable to proceed farther on account of ice. I asked the Captain if he were not going on up, he replied very coldly " not this trip". I asked him how we were to get to St. Paul, he said " We had good legs". I asked him what we were to do with our baggage, he said " He did not know". Well this was a pretty fix sure enough- We went to a livery stable, hired a wagon and horses- when within about 1 1/2 miles of St Paul we were told we could not cross the river so were compelled to turn about and cross the Minnesota river at Mendota, and go by way of Fort Snelling and Minneapolis to St. Anthony at which place we arrived on Sabbath night about 9 o'clock, pretty tired I assure You. At 2 o'clock I very reluctantly left the Doctor at St. Anthony and came down here to the coach- When after I had been here about half an hour, to my great joy and surprise here came the Doctor and Captain Briggs in the cap't's wagon- the cap't having arrived at St. Anthony a few minutes after I left, on his way down here for a load, and brought the Doctor with him and now here we are all together. I called on Mr Amberg and presented my order, he says he will pay it in the morning, of which I will inform You before I close this letter. I got my baggage all safe to St. Anthony- the two sacks of socks I have sent up to St Cloud today in a wagon, the balance is at St Anthony. I had to pay 1.50 dollars freight from Pittsburg to Chicago for extra baggage- that was all I had to pay through. Mr Boyd of Braddocks Fields, who came with us, lost his best coat off the top of his trunk, while coming up on the Boat, it is a loss to him- my freight sent to Dunleath by express contrary to directions, was sent immediately on to this place, which to my great satisfaction I find all safely here in the express office- this was very fortunate- if I had had it on the Boat, I don't know how I should have got it up from Hastings. All things considered we have been pretty lucky so far.

Now if I could only peep in and see how You are all getting along and know that all is well with You I should be well satisfied. Oh how I do hope You will all get along well and everything result fortunately for us all. How happy I should be to know that all is well with my dearly beloved ones- how cheering is hope, it is all my comfort now, I am almost afraid to receive a letter for fear the fond spell will be broken. May a good providence smile upon us, however unworthy.

There has been no snow here yet and the weather is quite mild- we found our blankets highly agreeable, while passing through the snow storm- the country looks beautiful here although foliage, flowers and grass are all gone still the landscape is beautiful- speculation runs mad and a very large immigration is looked for in the spring- a number of families are coming up now to locate, hardly knowing where they will winter- I pity them for I fear they will be disappointed, get discouraged and leave.

We heard from Henry and Berlin today- Mr Taylor was down after goods. Mr John Taylor returning with his wife met with an accident by the coach upsetting between here and St. Cloud and they receiving severe injuries- also Mr Sissons wife fell quite sick before they reached home- and we do not know whether they are at St. Cloud yet.

Tuesday morning-

All well- I have just this moment received the amount of Mr Lawskeys order \$400. so you can tell Mr Hunter to deliver the deed to Mr Coulter at any time. I will write a note to Mr Coulter, to call and get it- the Doctor is getting some drugs here and Capt. Briggs is buying provisions- I have nothing to get here and will leave for St Anthony today and for St Cloud today or tomorrow. We apprehend some difficulty in crossing the river at St. Cloud on account of the ice.

Kiss Will (the big fellow)- Mary- Jib- Jenny- Nettie five times each for me and my own Halsie forty times- and should you discover any person else suspected of belonging to me kiss them as often as you think they deserve- don't kiss Sis I want to kiss her myself and may get any person to kiss You that may fancy the entertainment.

Don't let Will and Mary neglect to write every day for a while at least- Damn up the old delinquents - make them pay- tell them you are a poor widow. Give my compliments to Mr Mc Connel- I hope he is doing a large cash business- he is worthy of success- but too honest for Wilkensburg.

Yours as ever, H.Z.Mitchell

Dearest Elizabeth;-

I have only time this morning to say that we are here, all well and doing well. Capt. Briggs came to St. Paul for his long delayed goods from the east-he has my cigars and tobacco on his wagon bound for St. Cloud. When I called at the express office at St. Paul for my goods- one box of my tobacco could not be found. I charged them 50 cts per hwt. for the tobacco made a profit enough to pay my bill at St. Paul and have also that the first loss should prove so much gain. Well we left St Paul yesterday about four o'clock-our wagon is heavily loaded and I walked all the way from St. Paul here except about one mile. I never walked with so much pleasure in all my life-the evening was one of the most beautiful and pleasant I ever saw- it was after night before we got to St. Anthony and the moon shone full and clear. The scenery was excessively grand- we had a clear full view by moonlight of old St Anthony falling into the embrace of the lower Mississippi-what an old rascal. Well we have a beautiful morning this, as soon as the Captain gets ready we will load our trunks and the remainder of our Baggage and take up our line of march for the clouds-where we expect to arrive some time on tomorrow if lucky- I expect to walk about half the way-walking is amusement here-last evening I would not have consented to ride in a coach lined with satin-free passage. I do not know when you will get my letters- I mailed one at St Paul for You and one for Mr Coulter yesterday informing You that the order had been paid and the deed may be delivered up at any time-but the river being distracted with ice by a heavy gorge below St Paul You may not get my letters for a long time-nor I get yours-so I just tell You the cause that You may not be uneasy-from all accounts St Cloud is prospering finely. Mt McFarland of Minneapolis said to me that it would be the third best town in the Territory-the weather here is most delightful-they had a cold snap last week, but now it looks like Indian Summer. More anon-Kiss the children for me-how I long to hear from You.

Yours as ever,

H.Z.Mitchell

To daughter Mary.

St. Cloud, Nov.29 '56.

My dear daughter Mary;-

I received your kind and welcome letter of the 9th. I was greatly rejoiced to hear that You are all well and getting along well-about being on top the house, when the cars whistled for school time and then having to come down, rattle-te-bang and without dressing to run hip-a-de-clip to the station, and go off so, to take music lessons in Pittsburg- all puts me very much in mind of my daughter Mary-I suppose when you get here and go hunting flowers, berries and fruit, as the roads here cross at right angles and every other imaginable angle about every hundred yards, no notice will be taken of the land marks and the next thing will be, our Mary is lost, cant find her way back- anxious parents start off in pursuit, with numerous friends, night comes on, bonfires will be made, horrible pictures of a little girl torn to pieces by hungry wolves, far out on the prairies-will fill the mind of anxious Mother almost to distraction all because the little thing was GLAKED (sic). Doctor calls dinner so I must stop and attend to him awhile- We have had quite an agreeable dinner dishes-fried beef (fresh), fried ham, boiled potatoes, stewed cranberries, accompaniments- bread butter and molasses-sometimes the Doctor- sometimes Henry cooks. We have cranberries all the time, unless the cooks neglect to stew some when they are done- but I soon put them in mind of their delinquencies, and the cranberries appear promptly- I bought a bushel a day or two ago in the upper town for \$1.50-they ask two dollars in this part of the town- they are very plenty this season- and have been bought as low as \$1.00 a bushel-the Doctor, Ed and myself the family today-Henry has gone to the country with Messrs Sisson and Alden sleigh riding- They are away however on business. I forgot to tell you when we want a clean table spread-we just take the jack plane and plane off the top of the table- isnt that handy-

Tell your good brother Will and Robt Johnston that I have read their papers and am much pleased that they have been so considerate- and hope they will continue to remember me in like manner-tell Will that I expect a letter from him by next mail which will be sometime next week-and will answer it immediately-You will write me soon again-be a good girl-be attentive to your lessons- obedient and affectionate to your Mother, kind to your Brothers, Sister, Cousin and Aunt-then I shall be much pleased with You and be your ever affectionate and loving- Pa.

H.Z.Mitchell to

Jenny S.Mitchell and Nettie Swisshelm

St.Cloud-

Nov.29 '56.

Dear Jennie and Nettie;-

I was glad to hear by the letters I received that You are both well. I think of You very often-imagine I see You making play houses-dressing your dolls-and arranging your patches. When Halsie comes along and overturns your arrangements-of course You dont get angry,but only laugh and say that is one of Halsies funny freaks-and go to work and fix all to rights again. I know You are and have been good little girls-Oh when you get out here in the spring-what a fine time You will have-You will see so many new things-I expect You will forget all about dolls and patches-You will have so many pretty places to make play houses,and so many pretty things to make and ornament them with-and then the days will be so long in summer. You can have so long time each day for play, and I think I see You skipping through the woods,hiding amongst the shrubbery like two little Fairies. Be good little girls,obey your Mamas-and next summer You shall have all these pretty things and besides You will be sure of heaps of love from Your.

Pa and Uncle.

Doctor Palmer and Uncle Henry send a great deal of love to You all.

To Son Jib.

St Cloud-Nov.29 '56.

My dear son Jib-

I received your very good letter and was pleased to know that your Mother is able to say that You are all good children.You may all be sure that when I am so far away from You,it is a great satisfaction to know You are good,kind and obedient to Your dear good Mother,and that you give her no cause for trouble on your account,continue to strive every day to make some improvement,be diligent in attending with cheerfulness to your lessons-dont let your Mother have to urge You-but rather ask your Mother or someone else to assist You and save your Mother the unpleasant necessity of reminding You constantly of Your duty-I want You to improve so much this winter that when You come to St Cloud in the spring I shall feel proud that people here shall know that You are my son-there are but few boys and girls here now and people here will soon know who You belong to. There is a new school house being built here- the frame is already up,so You see You will have to show your hand soon after You come here-and I should feel mortified to have it said " There is Jib Mitchell from Pennsylvania where they have so many schools and he doesnt know anything-he might as well have been brought up amongst the Indians-he is so ignorant and unmannerly." People here are very well behaved and intelligent and You will be noticed very soon.

I am glad to hear that You have been industrious and shelled so much corn. I wish we had a little bit of your nice sweet new corn meal here-it would be quite a luxury.

Lake George just back of our town is now frozen over and would be capital skating for the amusement of boys at noon during the recess of school hours-as it is but a short distance from where the school house is being built to the lake- but there is no school yet-very few boys and no skating that I have seen.Yet I hope You are taking good care of the chickens and Bruno,feeding them regularly and making them comfortable,it should be a great pleasure to You as far as You can to try to make every person and every thing around You comfortable-be kind to your Mother-Aunt-Brothers and Sisters and your dear little cousin Nettie And now my dear son if You will only faithfully remember and do as I have requested of You, You will be sure to merit the affection of your loving and devoted-

Pa.

To Daughter Mary-

St Cloud, Dec.14 '56.

My dear daughter Mary;-

I am much pleased with your letters, I am glad You have been so thoughtful. You have been good children for writing to me so often, it has been a great comfort to me,whilst so far and so long away to get good kind letters from You so often,though I get my letter but once a week,it is a comfort to get so many and all so good. Will has been very thoughtful in sending so many papers.Mrs Briggs is much pleased that he has sent her papers and periodicals. I am satisfied You have all been good children and your Pa loved You very much for it.About that name for Baby,I believe in writing to Jennie(before I received your letters) I said if You did not call him Ben he should not come with us to St.Cloud.

The Doctor,Hendy and your Pa were out a few evenings since to an oyster supper,by invitation at Mr Heiks.What do you think of that for Minnesota. Well we had quite a nice supper of stewed oysters,sardines,cranberries fritters,doe-nuts,mince pie,cran berry tarts. By next season there will be quite a number of pianos in St.Cloud,there are now

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H.Z.Mitchell to daughter Mary (con). Dec. 14 '56.
two here, and one at St. Paul to come up- half a dozen could be sold here now, I am told,
so You see we shall have plenty of music, even in this new country, at once. You must
try and learn fast, so that You may be able to play a great many pieces when You come here.
Your loving Pa.

N.B.Berlin to H.Z.Mitchell.

St Cloud, Sept. 7th '56.

Mr H.Z.Mitchell,

Dear Harry;-

I intended to write you a letter the other day but I know I failed to give you satisfaction the truth is / since I have come to Minnesota I am not the same and I-I-I- well I cant write, and thats so and I would not undertake it were it not that I am affectionately yours, but my dear Sir I assure you tis the fault of my head and not my heart, for I am contented and thankful that I have found so Delightful a country. I only wish you and your family were here.

Well here goes but dont laugh at broken sentences***-----
Local news. It is rumored in town today that this Dr. is one of the best men in the Territory and there are none of the same sort right around here. He came into our cabin today and said he, " I am going to my claim this afternoon and here is the key to our shanty and if you want anything in it go and get----- Henry is out at the farm ~~at~~ stabling his oats ----- I have received no letter from you but expect one by the next steamer----- The two lots directly in the rear of your store lot was sold yesterday for \$2.00 each and the one below Mr Taylors store, sold for \$5.00---- Mr Sisson was offered \$1.00 an acre for a part of his farm one mile from town and refused---- The river is still low but a rise is expected soon--- The sawmill will be rebuilt in a few days----- I wrote R.F.Sass from St. Paul but have received no answer--- boats from St Louis refuse to carry people on account of low water---- flour is \$12.00 per barl, corn meal 4.50 per hwt, fresh? pork 16 cts per lb. Doc says I wish Mitchell was here with his folks he-he-he we'll have lots of fun then, hes the strife for this country, he is Harry is you want to know any more you'll have to ask, thats all, My respects to all,

N.B.Berlin.

To H.Z.Mitchell from his Brother-in-Law.

St. Cloud, Sept 16 '59.

Dear Henry;-

Mr Sisson is just starting this morning and instead of writing a detail of matters and things here we request him to post you up on anything you may wish to know.

Mr Berlin is highly pleased with his prospect and says he will send for his father to come.

All goes " merry as a marriage bell" and St. Cloud stock is still on the rise.

The river is extremely low and still there is nowhere less than sixteen inches in the channel. I hope some enterprising Pittsburgers will come here to make a fortune by steamboating. Boats are all we want to make us happy. The sunny skies and bland breezes are glorious. Such weather!

Oh horrid ! The news has just come that every free state man has been killed and driven from Kansas. Is there a North ! and will they fight? Huzza for Maine, Fremont and Kansas forever!

Mr S. is waiting -

Yours truly,

Henry Swisshelm.

Dearest Elizabeth;

After walking 60 miles strait along from St. Paul & riding the balance of the way, we arrived here on Friday evening pretty tired. You may be sure never had such a walk in my life before, never want to have again-contracted a cold on the way, up better now. St. Cloud has improved some since I was here before- I find I have no more lumber here for my house than was secured from the ruins of the old saw mill, after it was burned- the order the Doctor sent to Little Falls to be sawed & sent down never came, so I have no chance left but to try & get it sawed here- there is a great want of lumber here- business seems quite brisk & things move along quite lively. We had beautiful weather all last week- it is a little colder now but not too cold for outdoor work- Berlin is quite fat and very busy- he is putting up a shop to work in at night- they are well & well pleased. I am living with the Dr. & Henry, they have their office plastered & it is quite comfortable & commodious. I have very little to write about now that is interesting. Intend to go over to the lakes in a few days, when I shall have more to say. The house that Mr McFarland was to have built is under way. I see a frame put upon the lot, which I judge to be about 30 by 40 ft. two stories a very good frame- they have nailed on some boards, but there is no person working at it now- I suppose for want of lumber. Mr Brot is not here but is expected in a few days- Mr. Taylor & Mr Sisson are here with their wives- both fine intelligent looking ladies. Mrs Sisson is quite handsome- there are quite a number of ladies here now- the Stearns Hotel seems to be headquarters for the elite. Mr John Taylor took the Dr. & myself to the Hotel last evening & introduced us to quite a number of ladies, amongst them his wife- after which she played a number of pieces on the piano and sang - accompanied or rather assisted by a number of other ladies & gentlemen. We had quite a gay time. Mr. Taylor lost two pianos by the sinking of a boat on the Mississippi- but was fully insured. Mr Sisson has brought on two pianos also as far as St. Paul- so you see St. Cloud is going to be a musical place. I went to church this afternoon with the Dr. & Henry- Mr John Taylor officiated dispensing the service & got along very well- he read a most excellent sermon from a book- the sermon was especially dedicated to the duties of young men & suited the occasion well. Mr Taylor has the upper part of their store house nicely fitted up & plastered, intending to move there with his new wife shortly. They will be quite near neighbors to us, when we get here. How I do wish you were all here. When shall I get a letter from you. I have a great mind to get homesick & take a big boo-hoo for relief. I am breathing short between hopes & fears looking for a letter. I intend to send this letter to Saint Paul tomorrow with Ed, he is going down with the team. We have not had mail here for two weeks. Kiss all the children Nettie included. Sis seems to be quite well known here- No more from your husband,
H.Z. Mitchell.

Dearest Elizabeth;

Nov. 23 '56.

It is now nearly three weeks since I left You & have not heard a word from You since- this is almost beyond human endurance. We had no mail here for two weeks until last Wednesday, & then only part of the mail came up & nothing for poor disconsolate Me. It is said here that as the contract for carrying the mail has passed into other hands, we will get our mail more regularly, hope so. The river here is still open but folks think it will close in a few days- the weather here has been quite pleasant for this season of the year, fully as pleasant as we are accustomed to have it at the same season in Penn. We do not know certainly who is elected President. Rumor says Buchanan is the man- I suppose so- it will be all the better for Minnesota if it is so- speculation is all the rage here, politics is a secondary consideration- There has been a large operator here from St Paul, buying property. He has bought quite a number of lots in the upper town. He bought one house & lot in this town for 1500 dollars (a small frame). The boys in this end of town are too smart for him, he can get but few lots here- though he says they are coming here in the spring to live. Henry & I are going 12 miles out in the country, up Sauk river, to see the country side & the new town in which the Dr. has an interest. The Sauk river country is said to be one of the finest countries in the Territory, both for beauty & fertility.

Capital is actively seeking investment here, property holders are not anxious to sell except at advanced prices- every person expects a good rush here in the spring. I feel every day more sanguine that this is the point- if I should succeed in making a claim & all is right at home, I may content myself here for some time yet. Could I but know that You are all well, I should feel as gay as a lark. We have not been over to Briggs yet but I think we will go this week. I should like to see the Lakes again. We

Henry Z. Mitchell to Elizabeth, his wife. Nov. 23 '56 (Con.)

We are all in excellent health- the Doctor, Henry & myself took tea at Mr. John Taylors last evening: "e had a very pleasant time, theyve just gone to housekeeping in their new home over the store. You need not buy any more socks- money is the best article in market- they hold on to money like Grim-death. I have Boyd, the young man who came with us, digging the cellar for the store. The order for the lumber is at the mill & part of it is sawed. I think we will get it up & sided in, in two or three weeks- at least I hope so- all that keeps us back is getting timber at the mill the proper size. Dont neglect to write as often as if I got Your letters every day, they will be good when they come. Yes it be to me like manna in the wilderness- write- write by all means- write often. I hope by next Wednesday when the mail comes, to get news from my dear ones at home. I will send a letter to be mailed at Cleveland some time this week, by one of the Mr Taylors, who is going to Connecticut for his wife. Kiss all my dear ones for me. Kiss Nettie & Sis- Respects to Mr. McConnell- Frank Gilmore. Goodnight. God bless You.

H.Z. Mitchell

Dearest Elizabeth;

Nov. 30 '56.

This is my birthday, I suppose you will not be aware that it is the anniversary of such an important event- & therefore it will be suffered to pass by neglected- as well with You as here- What a pity- Well I have commenced writing to you today expecting Mr Taylor to start east some time this week, who will take our letter as far as Chicago or Cleveland & there mail them. I received your good kind letter by last mail which was Wednesday. I was glad to get Yours & the childrens letters, however they did not bring the tidings which I long most to know- next Wednesday I suppose will disclose to me the best & worst of Your situation at home- I never have had my patience so severely taxed in all my life before, & if I were any place else but where I am I believe I should fail to bear up. Next Wednesday, oh it seems like a year of anxiety & solicitude to wait- & then should there be a mail failure- but I wont think of that- enough- God grant that all is well.

We have had (to me) very agreeable weather so far, there is some snow on the ground & snowing today. We have very good sleighing- Henry & the Dr. have bought a sled with which they intend Ed should do hauling from St Anthony, St Paul & other places this winter- as this is the only means of transportation here at this season of the year. The Doctor has quite a practice here already- there is another physician here- but I have known of but one case of sickness since I came, that our Doctor has not been called to visit. He is now attending a Mr Lowry of the upper town, one of the most wealthy & aristocratic men in this country & one of the first settlers. He has been with Mr Lowry five or six nights in succession. Mr Lowry sends his sleigh for him in the evening & sends him home in the morning. I dont think Mr Lowry is dangerously sick but he needs some attention & likes the Drs. company. He seems to have taken quite a fancy for our Doctor. He tells the Doctor he must have him no matter about the expense. I have been a good deal put out about the doctor staying away of nights so much (as we sleep together) & took occasion to tell him the other day if he did not stop it I should insist upon having a divorce. All the reply he made was " he-he-he-well." Henry went over the river yesterday & has not returned yet -so Ed & I were alone last night. Ed got the supper & breakfast. Our river is not closed yet- though our people are very anxious it should, as it is very difficult to cross on account of the running ice, so you may judge the weather has not been intensely cold yet. You could scarcely conceive the grandeur of one of our frosty mornings here- instead of fog & mist as we usually have in old Penn. the moisture in the atmosphere freezes & falls during the night like a light snow- & so exceedingly delicate are the particles, that they adhere to everything they come in contact with- then the effect on the appearance of the whole face of nature is too beautiful for me to describe, so I will leave you to imagine. We have had as yet (to me) but one disagreeable day & that was a real Penn. day.

Dec 2nd '56.

Winter has now fairly set in here, the river closed yesterday morning much to the satisfaction of the good denizens of St. Cloud & now people are crossing & re-crossing at pleasure. Mr Taylor had a load of goods on the opposite shore, exposed to the weather or anything else that might choose to destroy or appropriate them, for about a week. Folks here must be little inclined to thieving as many of the packages were so small, such as boxes of raisins, sardines etc. I wonder how long they would have been safe exposed similarly near Pittsburg? This morning we all rose early, got breakfast by daylight, hitched the horses to the sled & started for a trip to the country. Henry & myself started off, called for Mr Sisson at his place, then drove to the upper town, to meet the Doctor as per arrangement, as he was as usual at Mr Lowrie's last night, all night, but much to our

H.Z.Mitchell to Elizabeth his wife- Dec 2 '56 (Con.)

disappointment the Doctor did not meet us, sent a note that he could not go today-so the trip has been deferred till tomorrow. I am now all alone. Henry & Ed have gone to Ed's claim for a load of tamarac wood & the Dr. is still at Lowrys. I made my dinner on bread butter cranberries molasses & dried beef & have just finished washing out a pocket handkerchief for Myself. I suppose if Jennie could see it she would say "La-Pa-it is not half washed-I could wash it cleaner Myself." Well I only wish she were here to do it. We have some faint prospect of getting mail tonight-if not pretty certain tomorrow. I expected we should have commenced to have put up our house yesterday morning, but Mr Shepley came to me & pled in behalf of his wife & child that I would let him have Berlin one week, to fix the inside of his house. He said they were freezing & had to go to bed to keep warm. Although I knew his story was considerably exaggerated as I have been in his house a number of times still, You know I could not resist the importunities of women & children- especially so nice a woman as Mrs Shepley. Now dont get jealous. So you see the house wont be commenced for one week yet-in fact the lumber is not yet all got out- our saw mill is a perfect one horse concern & the proportions a good deal smaller.

Dec. 3rd.

We have just returned from our trip up Sauk River-had a pleasant day sled riding-shot two prairie chickens- have just opened and read letters from home dated 10th & 14th Nov. You cannot imagine how glad I was to hear You have a fine Boy & are still living. I opened the letters with a trembling hand- but so far Providence has smiled upon us- may the same kind hand protect us through the balance of life's journey. I have to close this letter & hand it to Mr Taylor in a few minutes so I can hardly think of anything more to say & feel quite numb from a long ride in the cold air. Tell the children I have read all their letters up to the 14th Nov. I will write to Will next. I am glad to hear he is so good a boy. I will reward him well. Kiss all my dear six children- Sis & Nettie.

Your husband- H.Z.Mitchell.

Dearest Elizabeth;

December 14 '56.

You cant conceive how rejoiced I was to hear that You are again so well. Your letter to me was the most welcome & gratifying token I ever received. I have read it often & as often with delight. You were able to write to me Yourself, then it was not as if it had been done by an invalid, dont think me insincere when I say that the handwriting seemed pretty, the prettiest I ever saw You do. I hope You have continu'd to improve in health & by this time are quite well. I feel quite anxious to see that "prettiest" Baby Boy, but as every succeeding addition to our family has always by impartial nurse, aunt & children been announced as an improvement on all preceding ones, when the fact is the first will compare favorably with any of the rest, so I shall wait till I see for myself before making up my mind about matters of so grave importance. Still I have no doubt but young Ben is a remarkably fine boy & I expect to be the happiest man in the world when I shall be allowed to make his acquaintance, & greet his dear Mother & all the rest of my loved children again.

On Friday last about 3 o'clock the Doctor, Henry & Myself started over to Capt. Briggs. "e had a very pleasant ride going over, not so fine however as last June, then prairies were covered with bloom, the air balmy & fragrant with the odor of flowers. Now all in mantled in one broad garment of pure white snow, & the thermometer at 12 to 20 below zero. e have had so far however the finest winter weather I ever saw. Well we found Capt. Briggs & family all well. Mr Briggs as happy apparently as a Bird, they seemed glad to see us & entertained much better than I thought they could, circumstanced as they are, they are still in the old shanty, have not commenced their new house yet. We had plenty of fresh & corned fish, fresh beef roasted, & fresh pork boiled. While there, accompanied with many other luxuries & dainties not the least of which was cranberries- on Saturday (yesterday) the Capt. hooked his fine span of bays to our sled & after breakfast, when we started over the prairies, through groves & grubs, over the lakes & brooks a merry ride had We & did not return until about 3 o'clock, when Mrs Briggs had served up for us a most excellent & bountiful dinner supper & if You had seen us eat, You would have thought there was need for the abundance (at least) with which her table was supplied. Well after supper which was near night we left for St. Cloud, it was dark when we left the Frenchman & soon after lost the road, the snow having drifted the tracks full. When after driving back to the Frenchman's house we took the road again & with better success as the moon had risen we got here about nine o'clock last night, having travelled about eighteen miles without stopping.

Henry Z. Mitchell to Elizabeth his wife. Dec 14 '56 (Con.)

Henry & Berlin have started off on foot hunting up claims & other game, to be gone until tomorrow, the Doctor has gone to Mr Lowrys to stay all night, so You Ed & I are keeping house alone. The Doctor baked us a loaf of bread this morning before he left & Ed is now preparing to get our supper. They are all pretty good cooks. Berlin commenced at our house last week but has made but little progress, yet it is going to be a pretty expensive affair. I have to pay 20 dollars for lumber & 6 dollars per thousand for shingles. Everything is high here this winter except the thermometer, that is always lowest here, when everything else is highest. Flour is selling at \$13 per bbl, corn meal \$7 pr cwt. beans \$8 per bushel, Beef 12 1/2 Cts per lb by the gr. Hogs \$15 per cwt, chickens \$1.50 per pr. butter 40 to 50 cts when it can be had, no person pretends to use milk in their coffee or tea, coffee & sugar 20 cts per lb, molasses \$1.50 per gal. Clothing seems to be the most abundant article in the trade here, & sells lower than anything else in proportion. I hope You have made a great deal of lard, it is worth 20 cts per lb here, still with those prices people seem to get along easier here than with us, wages are in proportion & plenty to do. Corn sells at \$1.50 & oats \$1.00, wheat \$2.00, potatoes \$1.50 pr bus. I have sent you this price current that You may be able to answer interrogatories & when they ask You how I like this country tell them I don't like any other. Kiss all the children, Sis & Nettie but especially little Ben for me & when I return You will be fully indemnified by your loving husband-
H.Z. Mitchell

Dearest Elizabeth;

Dec. 22, '56.

I rec'd your letter dated Dec. 1st by last Wednesdays mail. You may be sure I was glad to hear that you were all well & I most fervently hope that you may continue so. Your letter & one received by Berlin from his father give deplorable accounts of the sickness & mortality prevailing at East Liberty. I trust Wilkesburg may escape a similar visitation. I was glad to hear that there was a rise in the river & hope you have had a good Coal Boat rise. I am sorry to hear times are so hard about Pittsburg. I am afraid we shall have hard work to raise money, if only we could sell the balance of our property at some price- it must be sold- there is not much doing here this winter- & have no doubt but there will be suffering with some of the poor folks who live in the country on claims & are poorly provided for subsistence through a long winter- there is no doubt but next spring will witness a great change in St. Cloud & the surrounding country. It is expected there will be a great demand for town lots as well as country property & doubtless the excitement will run high. There is always a good deal of crowding & some litigation about claims near to this place.

We are now living in true border style, eating venison & other game almost every day. Henry & Berlin went hunting as I wrote You in a former letter about the time they started out. They were gone several days, & returned with a fine Buck, some prairie chickens & rabbits. Henry shot the buck & says he did not get the buck fever until after he had shot it. We think that was certainly the most sensible time to be effected with that peculiar sensation, which all sportsmen seem subject to when attempting to shoot their first deer. We had a loin nicely roasted by our Henry himself for our yesterdays dinner, it was done as might have tempted an epicure if we had such character amongst us & I assure you we relished it with zest.

Our Doctor says he wishes Mrs Mitchell was in St Cloud & located that he might have a home in Minnesota, to which I instinctively ejaculated Amen, so might it be. The Doctor is going to a Mr Adams beyond St Anthony on a professional visit & will not be back for ten days or two weeks. I shall stay here until he returns if I get no unfavorable news from You. I shall send this letter with the Dr. to St. Anthony. Kiss all my dear ones for me & accept renewed evidence of my undying affection & love for you all.

Your husband,

H.Z. Mitchell.

B.R. Palmer to H.Z. Mitchell - St. Cloud Jan. 20th '57.

Dear Mitchell;

I let last weeks mail go by without writing to you on acct of having been at the time much engaged. We all feel very anxious about you- as we have had so much snow- we have feared that you might meet with a good deal of delay in getting to Danleith & equally as much in getting from there to Chicago. The weather has been cold- about the same as before you left, but not enough to prevent the St Cloud denizens from enjoying themselves at sleighing parties with the mercury ever so far below zero. I have for my part never enjoyed so pleasant a winter. Last week Henry & John Taylor & Brott & myself with ladies attended a party at Mr Woods, Sauk Rapids & I don't think that in Pittsburg or

any of your cities a more refined accomplished & well dressed party could be collected, your humble servant of course excepted, or that any host could entertain them more hospitably & handsomely than Mr & Mrs Wood. Two days afterwards we got up a very pleasant party from St.Cloud to Stevensons at Clear Lake, where we had a capital time, & where our friend Berlin covered himself with glory in making a Womans Rights speech in costume. Of course our company on these occasions were chiefly married people, but all the better for that, & we only regretted that Mr Mitchell had not been here to have enjoyed the parties & to have added to the mirth of these occasions. Since then the whole interest of the community has been diverted from parties to Town building. Last week Mr Curtis from St Anthony favored St Cloud with his august presence, with his black chargers & superb sleigh. He put up at the Stearns Hotel & from there proceeded in state to the Records Office. Much to his astonishment no doubt, he could not find the town of Hartford on the records. But Rockville was there & Mr Curtis' name was not. This was a little unfortunate for he had sold one share in Hartford for \$1200.00 & lots too numerous to mention. In this dilemma he did not call on me, but went directly back to St Anthony & what he has determined to no man in St.Cloud knoweth. But the affair did not end there. Mr Brott being here on the ground & ready to take advantage of anything that might turn up, thinking it a pity that so much advertising of the town of Hartford should be lost, immediately organized a company to lay out a town. Somewhere on the Sauk as near as they could find a place to suit the description of the advertisements- this was a claim about two miles above Rockville. This was all a secret & I did not hear their intention until after they had started & been on their way an hour. It then occurred to me that if they could be induced to lay out their town on Gaylords claim just opposite Rockville instead of being an injury it would be a great advantage to our place. Henry & Shepley were in the office at the time. I pointed this out to them & urged them to start was ready, join them & make the proposition- to see Gaylord & if possible "insense" him into the advantages of such an arrangement. Well they started & four miles out found them stuck in a snow drift & one of the horses given out. The proposal was well received & they went with our team & laid out the Town & today Mr Noel is plotting the town of Hartford from our plot of Rockville making the streets run into each other. The company of Hartford is composed for the present of the following individuals- Brott, Sisson, Taylor, Swisshelm, Alden, Shepley, Caruthers, Hendricks & Beede- the two later from Minneapolis. I dont know of anything that could have happened better for our town- whatever they do will be for our benefit. They are all mightily pleased with the location on the Sauk- about the right distance from St.Cloud & are talking of purchasing the Saw Mill here & placing it in Hartford, if we will build a grist mill on our stream. A bridge is to be built this winter across the Sauk at our place & the road opened to Richmond, by which the great Red River road will be turned through Hartford & Rockville & come into St.Cloud past my claim- shortening the Red River route 5 or 6 miles & bringing it to lower St.Cloud. All the St Cloud interests are anxious to have that done. They all say that it is bound to be a place- you see there are enterprising men among them who will leave no stone unturned to make it go. I am expecting they will make us some kind of proposition to unite our interests- for my part I should like to do so. I was twice to see Briggs last week- but he was not at home- was down the river- hope to see him this week. I found laths at Lowrys & they are all at the spot for use \$4.00 per M. the boards are not yet sawed but there will be no trouble about them, by taking 12 by 16 ft. boards. It is impossible to think of doing anything to your house at present. The thermometer night before last while our friends were out Town making indicated 44 below zero- nobody minded it. I am not obliged to stay at Lowrys now- visit him every day or two- much better. Write as soon as you get this. All are well. Best love to Mrs Mitchell & Mrs Swisshelm & the children.

St.Cloud.

B.R.Palmer.